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<Mary.Skahen@state.ma.us>
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2011 5:59 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to follow up on an email I sent to you last week regarding our ongoing efforts to improve the services and supports we offer to children, youth and families across our agencies. As I mentioned in my previous email, a broad range of stakeholders – including staff, advocates, consumers and legislators – have been clear about their belief that we can and must design a more holistic approach to service delivery for children, youth and families – one that offers supports that are more integrated and coordinated. You, as state employees, will be an integral part of our work to better serve families.

We are committed to developing an integrated system that offers:

- **Ease of access** via a single point of entry.
- **Optimal responsiveness** – Families’ needs are not isolated to categorical eligibility; families want services that respond to their evolving needs.
- **Continuity of Care** through integration and coordination of services and treatment approaches.
- **Service optimization** through monitoring outcomes in a holistic manner.
- **Resource maximization** through a single management, accountability and oversight structures and processes

As a starting point for discussions with advocates, legislators, state government partners, unions, employees, and other stakeholders, we are proposing the creation of a new agency charged with offering integrated and coordinated service delivery and case management. The agency would be comprised of three divisions: 1) Child Wellness, Development and Behavioral Health; 2) Juvenile Justice; and 3) Child Welfare. We also propose establishing “Family Access Centers” throughout the Commonwealth to function as a community-based front door to information and referral for clients and propose to repurpose existing resource centers that now currently exist across agencies. The agency and its three divisions would share administrative services and operational supports. We also anticipate creating an Advisory Commission, consisting of a broad array of stakeholders, to help craft the implementation plan; recommend “best fit” solutions for certain specialty services; and guide the first two years of the implementation. We also propose an interagency working group composed of staff from different state agencies to guide this process.

It is important to note that we do not see this as a cost-saving exercise and do not expect the redesign to impact staffing or funding levels. Rather, this effort is rooted in our commitment to doing everything we can to serve consumers better. We recognize that this is a significant undertaking that will require significant collaboration. We look forward to engaging in a thorough and thoughtful series of discussions about ideas for improving service delivery for children, youth and families. State employees, so many of whom are on the “front lines” of service delivery, will play a key role as we refine our plans, and I welcome your input and feedback. We will keep you informed about opportunities to engage with your agency head and representatives of the Executive Office about your perspectives.

In the meantime, thank you for the work you do each and every day.

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.

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Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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